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Major OWEN thought it probable that the author of the paper in speaking of Bengal had not limited his observations to the province of Bengal but to the Presidency, which included the whole country. This class of people were not peculiar to Bengal, but the race were found elsewhere. One class was said to congregate much in Benares, from which place they distributed themselves and returned at certain periods. Major Owen mentioned that during the mutiny in India in a remote part of the country his soldiers found some children of the gipsy race who would not give any account where they came from, nor could the tribe to which they belonged be discovered. He said that the gipsies in speaking the Hindu language among themselves inverted the position of the letters so as to make a slang language unintelligible to others.

Mr. HIGGINS said there was a tribe in Madras called Brinjari, who were never found living in towns, and were considered by many persons to be gipsies. He should be glad to know whether they were the same as the Bediyas mentioned in the paper; and also whether philologists traced any resemblance between the words Brinjari and Zingari. They were not a vagrant race, but were employed in carrying corn.

Dr. DUTT, in explanation of his previous observations, said there are women who wander about Bengal and speak the Bengalese language so imperfectly as to show that it is not their own dialect, but there are others who speak it correctly. They were different classes of bediyas. There was another wandering class mentioned in the seventh volume of *Asiatic Researches*, by Captain Richardson. His own impression was that the two classes who are jugglers are not gipsies; but that the other class, who go about the country professing to cure diseases, may belong to the same race as the gipsies, but that they are not natives of Bengal.

Mr. HYDE CLARKE commented on the grammatical structure of the language of the gipsies, remarking that, although it was considerably affected by the language of the country in which they resided, it was decidedly of an Indian character. The gipsies in Spain adopted several Spanish words, and it was the same with those in Italy.

Dr. CHARNOCK agreed with Mr. Hyde Clarke in considering the paper to be valuable, as showing a connection between the gipsies of the east and those of the west. In the vocabulary of the language, he found twenty-seven words out of forty-nine derived from the Hindostanee or Bengalee; in some of the words the letters had been inverted, so as to make what is called back slang. In the Lord's Prayer in the gipsy language, he found that two-thirds of the words were derived from the Hindostanee. He thought the way in which the gipsies settled their disputes was worthy of imitation.

The following paper was then read:—

*On a Bechuana Skull.* By R. W. PAYNE, Esq., F.A.S.L.

A few words on a skull. When a boy at school I recollect a skull was defined in some elementary book as a bony box covering and protecting the brain. Since then it has appeared to me as rather an

anomaly that when the brain is the least worth protecting, being of an inferior quality, the skull is thickest. The particular skull in question was picked up by me a few miles south of Zoutpansberg, in the Transvaal district of South Africa, and doubtless belonged to a Bechuana or Makalaka. When first found it was in a tolerably fresh condition, the birds having taken a good deal of the flesh from it, and the ants completed, or nearly so, the purifying process. No doubt its original owner had come to grief in the Veldt, either from a blow from another black brother, from sickness, or from a lion. This tribe of the Bechuana is not a particularly interesting one, as like the Negroes generally, it is in a stationary state as regards mental and moral cultivation, and is retreating from before the white man like other savage tribes, and will doubtless continue to retreat until it reaches the wilds of Equatorial Africa, where, as Mr. Crawford once observed, it will most probably remain, as no one else can live there, or would wish to do if he could. The Bechuana is a lower class Negro than the Zulu, as he is neither physically so powerful, morally so brave, nor mentally so cunning. The Makalaka is the lowest class of Bechuana. It were much to be wished that travellers would endeavour to procure such relics of humanity as this, and bring them home, so that from comparison the characteristics of races might be studied. There is a little difficulty in obtaining crania, which might by exertion, however, be overcome, and most interesting collections formed, which would aid more the advancement of our knowledge of race than any other means; such collections, however, must consist of a great number of each type, or individual peculiarities will upset any theory. I present this skull to the Anthropological Society, as probably the only Mancatee or Makalaka skull in England, with the hope that it may acquire eventually a number of others, and so gradually attain to that position in power of demonstration which the energetic labours of its president and members deserve.

I venture to give a short anecdote, illustrating the difficulty referred to, of which the truth was vouched to me, but which I merely give as I received it.

An anatomist asked a celebrated missionary in the interior of Africa to procure for him the skull of a Bushman. The missionary said to a Griqua hunter, who lived in his neighbourhood, "Jantje, I want a Bushman's skull. You will probably be able to pick one up one of these days, as you must have opportunities of doing so when in the hunting veldt." A few weeks after, Jantje brought a skull in an unmistakeably lively condition to his pastor, who expressed his fears that the Bushman had fallen a sacrifice to his friend's thirst for science; and such was the case, as Jantje considered the easiest way to get a Bushman's skull was to kill the Bushman; and Bushmen are considered by all natives of Africa except themselves as of very small value. As the Dutch word *kop*, which means head, would probably be used in the instructions, it is not unlikely the Griqua considered he was doing his minister's pleasure in an orthodox manner. I can assure you, however, that the skull I give you was obtained in a legitimate way, and that my hands are clean of the blood of its original owner.

The thanks of the meeting having been given to Mr. Payne,

Dr. HUNT said that Mr. Payne had spent several years at Natal, and was an active member of the Society. He was glad that he had presented that skull, as it was the only one of a similar description in a London museum. Mr. Payne was actively working for the Society, and promised to send them other specimens.

Mr. BAINES made some remarks on the Bechuanas, of whom he said there were many tribes with different names, but they had a general similarity of form.

The next paper read was,

*On the Natives of Madagascar.* By THOMAS WILKINSON, Esq., F.A.S.L.

The natives of Madagascar may be classed into two distinct divisions, namely, those who inhabit the coasts, and those who inhabit the interior. The former have woolly hair, brown or black skins, strong white teeth, and in fact all the characteristics of a superior order of Negroes, though, in many, the facial angle is more sharply developed than in African races generally. They have a fondness for music and gaudy colours, and possess much sensuality, strong imaginations, credulity and indolence. They have, within the last few years, been conquered by the natives of the interior of the island, called *Hovas*, who, though for a length of time kept back from the sea coasts by the belt of Negroes, by which their inland fastnesses were encircled, at last, by dint of superior skill and energy, succeeded in overcoming their heavy limbed and thick-skulled Negro opponents. These latter are variously named according to that portion of the lowlands which they inhabit; thus the natives of the eastern coast, opposite to the British colony of Mauritius, are called *Bétsimāsarakas*, and were formerly independent, occasionally waging war with other independent tribes in their vicinity. Now, however, the *Hovas*, though they may use occasionally violent measures towards the conquered tribes, force them to keep the peace among themselves. The *Hovas* inhabit a country rocky and broken in the extreme, in the centre of the island, and which, on account of its elevation, is, notwithstanding its low latitude (about 19° S.) very temperate in climate. These people are generally slender, often small, with, in many cases, long, straggling, unsound, and ugly teeth, straight coarse hair and light brown skins, with faces resembling those of the Chinese or of other Mongolian races. They are shrewd, sceptical, good diplomatists (having several times diplomatically checkmated the French), good hands at driving a bargain, and oftener cheat foreigners than they allow foreigners to cheat them. They show much aptitude for learning and imitating foreign manners and customs. They partially understand European drill, and have procured European fire-arms. Their language, which was formerly only a spoken one, has been by English missionaries reduced to a written one, and is at this moment read and written by at least one-fourth of the male Hova population of Smerins, or *Emeryn*, as the French call it, the name of the native province of the *Hovas*. They are gradually but surely learning the manners and customs of more civilised nations, and will, no doubt, eventually attain as high a degree of civilisation